

June 2003

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From the Director

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commerce matters

North Dakota
LEGENDARY

Tourism is on the move

The entire North Dakota Department of Commerce, Tourism Division included, will say goodbye to downtown Bismarck and hello to the north side in June when it completes its move to Century Center.

The move is part of a project to bring all divisions of the Commerce Department together in a centralized location. Tourism has been located on the first floor of the Wells Fargo Bank building on Broadway for the last 18 months, and other divisions are scattered throughout the building.

"The move will allow us to coordinate better within the Department of Commerce and help us better serve our clients and partners," Tourism Division Director Sara Otte Coleman said.

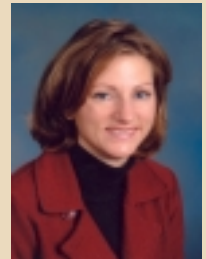
Joining Commerce at Century Center will be Workforce Safety and Insurance (formerly Workers Compensation), North Dakota Parks and Recreation, Risk Management, Child Support Services, and the Council on the Arts. Activities in the Tourism office will be scaled back



Century Center

From the Director

After four months as tourism director for North Dakota, I am very excited about all the opportunities and the progress we are making as an industry. I will take a few paragraphs each quarter to give you an overview of what we are accomplishing at ND Tourism.



Sara Otte Coleman

We wrapped up the legislative session with a budget that could give us the edge we need in the next few years to drive record traffic to North Dakota. Senate Bill 2337 will add an estimated \$2.9 million to our budget for the purpose of marketing North Dakota as a must-see destination during the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commemoration. These dollars will be added to the estimated \$4.5 million dollar uncommitted general fund budget. This will bring our budget to over \$7.4 million dollars for the biennium. Although we are thrilled with the increase, our annual budget of \$3.7 million still lags behind our neighboring states that boast budgets of \$6.9 million for South Dakota; \$7.7 million for Montana; and \$9.9 million for Minnesota.

Our investment plan for those dollars is to purchase as much regional media as possible while maintaining other program areas. As directed by the bill, I recently sent out an RFP to advertising agencies for a media plan

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during the week of June 16-20. The division will still be accessible by E-mail or by phone at 328-2525 or 800-435-5663. However, individual staff members may not be available at various times during the move. Tourism's new address will be Century Center, 1600 E. Century Ave., Suite 2, Bismarck, N.D., 58503. Other contact information should remain the same. ●

Streamlined data

Tricia Miller, who joined Tourism as data coordinator in May, isn't wasting any time. Miller has streamlined the requests that pour into the division and packaged them into easy-to-understand spreadsheets.

The information will help Tourism officials decide in the future which media provided the best return on its investment.

In the past, Tourism tracked the number of requests generated by its television advertising, magazine advertisements or articles, phone calls and Web hits. The current process makes the information more readily available. ●

Travel Guide deadline

Outdoor recreation providers have until June 13 to get their service to Tourism for consideration for the 2004 travel guide. Call us at 800-435-5663. ●

Director

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that includes additional dollars to be spent this summer. Our 2003 spring media campaign was funded at \$360,000 (\$30,000 less than 2002) and is almost completed. All the travel research I have read shows that most summer travel plans have not yet been made. The average planning time is currently at 2-3 weeks. In order to capitalize on the short planning cycle and our increased budget, I felt the best strategy would be to get a competitive bid from state-registered advertising agencies for a media campaign to begin in July. We are moving fast, but we did not want to miss the opportunity to have an impact in this unique travel season.

Our public relations campaign has seen great results this year, with over 31 media mentions to date in 25 national and international publications. Articles such as the one in the June 2003 Readers Digest add third party credibility and help us to increase the awareness of our state and create the image we deserve. It is a

program we work on daily and has proven to be successful.

Lastly, I want to update you on our staffing. Since coming on board we have had several staff changes and we now have a few more to add to the list. Mark Zimmerman, our outdoor marketing director, is now our resident expert on nature tourism. I know this is an important segment of our industry and I wanted to make sure we are giving it the attention it deserves by providing a consistent staff person. It also fits perfectly with the outdoor resources that Mark sells every day.

In another move, Rachel Retterath has been promoted to Communications Director effective July 8. Her experience working for the division as Lewis and Clark Coordinator and for an advertising agency qualifies her for her new duties, which will include all areas of marketing and communications.

We look forward to hearing about your summer traffic. Best wishes for a great season!! ●

Delbert Wood sees North Dakota

After 20 years, Delbert Wood came home to North Dakota, courtesy of the United States Post Office.

Wood, who once lived in western North Dakota, was a winner in the "SeeAmerica Sweepstakes." Promotional posters directed people to SeeAmerica.org where they registered for a chance to win a six-night, seven-day dream vacation to one of 50 states. Wood registered in his hometown of Colorado Springs, Colo.



Delbert Wood was the winner of the SeeAmerica tour of North Dakota.



30,000 post offices nationwide.

The promotion generated tremendous coverage in print as well as more than 800 television stories.

Devils Lake, Minot, Watford City, Bismarck-Mandan and Jamestown.

The SeeAmerica Sweepstakes promotional poster was placed in more than

Interest high at Pow-Wow

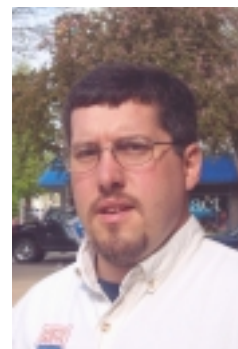
In May, North Dakota Tourism Division's Fred Walker, along with Marion Houn of Fort Abraham Lincoln Foundation, David Borlaug of Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center and Terry Harzinski of Bismarck-Mandan CVB, attended the TIA International Pow-Wow held in St. Louis, Mo.

The show's attendance was down nearly 1,500 delegates this year due to the concerns with the Iraq situation, SARS, and the poor economy in much of Europe. But North Dakota's qualified leads at the 2003 Pow-Wow were the highest that it has had since it started attending the show. North Dakota showed a net increase of 70 percent in meetings from the 2002 show, 53 this year from 37 in 2002. Many international delegates were looking forward to the start of a big year in the U.S. market due to the increase of the value of European money in comparison to the American Dollar. For example, the Norwegian Kroner has gained nearly 50 percent in the past few years.

Media interest is extremely high. Surprisingly, of the interest, only a portion seemed to generated by the commemoration of the Corps of Discovery Bicentennial (Lewis & Clark).

During the show, details on agri-tourism, nature-based tourism, Lewis & Clark, ranch vacations, cultural/historic tourism/sites and North Dakota American Indians were discussed.

Immediately following Pow-Wow, Inge Lundereng, a Norwegian journalist who writes for Vi-Menn magazine, came to North Dakota on his second trip to the state this year. His four-page article on Fort Mandan and the Corps of Discovery was published in Vi-Menn this past



Walker

spring. Vi-Menn has the third largest readership in all of Norway.

On his latest trip, Lundereng spent time in the Fargo-Moorhead area and experienced “the real” ranch life at Knife River Ranch with Ron and Lois Wanner. He took part in the spring round-up and branding while at the ranch.

American Journal writers who spent time in North Dakota last month are back in Germany now and e-mailed Walker to thank all of the people involved in their trip. “Everything worked out perfectly and our visit was both interesting and fun,” they said. “And we were amazed how many interesting Lewis and Clark sights North Dakota has to offer. Hope to come back to North Dakota.”

The first travel article will be published at the end of June. ●

Refuges celebrate anniversary

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the National Wildlife Refuge System and events planned in North Dakota to honor the centennial are as numerous as ducks in a prairie pothole. All 62 refuges in the state are celebrating with events and activities that run through October.

Authorized by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1903, the National Wildlife Refuge System has grown to include 540 refuges and more than 3,000 wetlands areas. The refuge system is credited with helping to save the American bald eagle from extinction. In addition, it protects hundreds of species of birds, fish, animals and plants. North Dakota is home to more than a third of the nation’s waterfowl production area.

More than 1,000 people are expected to gather July 25-27 at Sullys Hill National Game Preserve near

Devils Lake. The Birding and Nature Festival will include workshops, tours, nature programs, bird watching and the refuge system. Contact 701-766-4272 for information.

A highlight of the centennial events in North Dakota is set for Aug. 16 at Des Lacs National Wildlife Refuge one mile from Kenmare. Enjoy airboat rides, the dedication of the new visitors center and a buffalo barbeque supper. Hourly birding field trips and bus tours are planned. For information, call 701-385-4046.

For several weeks in September, school students will be out at the crack of dawn to help band ducks at J. Clark Salyer National Wildlife Refuge near Upham.



Lostwood National Wildlife Refuge.

Each year winners of an Arkansas competition travel to North Dakota to participate. Up to 9,000 ducks will be banded. For information or to participate, call 701-768-2548.

For a complete list of events and activities scheduled in honor of the 100th anniversary of the National Wildlife Refuge System, contact the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service at 701-250-4418. ●